

SPKE

Conestoga College, Kitchener

DECEMBER 20, 1999

What's Inside



Holiday flicks for the family.

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Humber squeaks by Condors.

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Conestoga hammered 7-2 by Seneca.

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Has Christmas lost its meaning?

Student feels some campuses are black sheep

By Anna Sajfert

A second-year welding engineering technician student from Conestoga's Guelph campus says he is fed up with the way satellite campuses are treated by the college.

When Jamie Talbot and his classmate Kevin Lee first visited the Kenneth E. Hunter Recreation Centre on Doon campus, they were asked to present their student cards and then told to leave, he said.

"We were told by a person at the rec centre to get a membership through the Doon Student Association if we wanted to use the facility," Talbot said. "But it was like, 'What membership and what's the Doon Student Association?' How come no one told us about either?"

Talbot said he was also upset when no one from Conestoga College informed Guelph students about the Conestoga leather jacket sale, held on Doon campus in March.

"I was told by the Guelph campus secretary to contact the Doon Student Association and ask about the sale," said Talbot who added he had never heard of the DSA before.

"By the time I was able to find out who the DSA was, the sale was over," he said.

Talbot, who will graduate in May 2000, said when he first attended class on Guelph campus, he was only informed about the location of welding labs and the list of course material he was required to purchase.

"Where is the school spirit?" he said. "People say college years are the best years of your life, but it's been shitty so far."

Talbot said Doon campus doesn't recognize students from Guelph campus as part of Conestoga College because they don't have access to the same student services as Doon students.

At present, students from satellite campuses may access the rec centre if they agree to pay the \$20 recreational fee every semester. However, DSA services such as the prescription drug plan, scholarships and bursaries, bus trips and

used textbook sale are not available to them because they are not members of the Doon Student Association. Doon campus students, on the other hand, pay a yearly fee of \$54.50, which covers the cost of DSA services and activities.

"It was just recently that I found out how big Conestoga College was," Talbot said, adding he wasn't aware of the plans to build a second Waterloo campus on University Avenue.

Guelph campus is in the back woods and the news doesn't seem to reach there, Talbot said.

"Nobody from Guelph campus is aware of the extra-curricular activities. We're really kept in the dark," he said.

Talbot's complaint comes at the same time that the DSA executive is brainstorming about how to provide representation for students at Doon, Waterloo, Guelph, Cambridge and Stratford through a reorganization of the Doon Student Association.

"We want to give those students representation and access to services such as the DSA prescription drug plan," said DSA president Ellen Menage.

At present, the ideas about restructuring the DSA executive are only generic and they will be discussed more at the next DSA board of directors meeting in January 2000.

Conestoga principal Grant McGregor said there is demand for student representation at satellite campuses and this needs to be considered.

"A student association such as the DSA is best poised to give these people the services they need," said McGregor.

He said he is pleased to see that the DSA wants to take action and help those students by giving them representation through a student representative body.

Talbot said he doesn't mind paying the fees — he only wishes the communication lines between the two campuses would be more open.

"Conestoga needs to improve ties (with) its satellite campuses."

In the spirit of giving



Alycia Punnett, DSA promotions assistant, helped organize the Christmas Wish Tree event and decorate the six-foot hand-painted Christmas tree in the DSA's office on Doon campus. Thirty children of financially strapped Conestoga students received gifts this Christmas after Conestoga students and employees donated money to the wish fund. (Photo by Anna Sajfert)

See editorial page 2

Classrooms and computer labs will be open over the holiday

By Beverley Grondin

Although classes and exams will be over by Dec. 22 for the holiday season, classrooms and computer labs will remain open on certain days over the two-week break.

Classrooms and labs at Waterloo, Guelph and Doon campuses will be open until 11 p.m. until Dec. 23 and until noon on Dec. 24.

Computer labs at Waterloo, Guelph and Doon campuses will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 27 through Dec. 30. Room A9 at Guelph campus will

remain open at the same time on these days.

All buildings and classrooms will be closed Dec. 25, 26 and 31 and Jan. 1 and 2.

Hours for the Kenneth E. Hunter

recreation centre are posted in the recreation centre. Learning Resource centre hours during the holiday

Conestoga College

are also posted.

Classes for trades certificate and apprenticeship programs, preparatory studies programs and academic upgrading courses will begin Jan. 3.

All regular classes will resume Jan. 10.

College has holiday spirit

It was encouraging to see Conestoga College students' and employees' charitable response to the Doon Student Association's Christmas Wish Tree event, held from Nov. 1 to Dec. 7.

To children Christmas should be a magical time of Santa Claus, reindeers, bright lights and wishes upon stars. For some children, though, Christmas may be a reminder of a world that has neglected them.

This year's Christmas Wish Tree event, organized by the DSA, has brightened the smiles of 14 girls and 20 boys.

The DSA, students and employees of Conestoga College are to be commended for their generosity.

weeks. She added that some business students are fund-raising on Doon campus to gather more money for the children's Christmas gifts.

"One group, who wished to remain anonymous, donated enough money to buy four presents," she said.

A few days ago, a mother and daughter walked into the DSA office to drop off a gift, said Punnett.

A picture of a six-foot Christmas tree was drawn by the executive and hung on an office door in the Sanctuary. Reindeer and angel nametags, each bearing a child's name and the kind of gift requested, were designed and placed on the tree.

The DSA executive also designed flyers to promote the month-long event and circulated them in departments on Doon campus.

The gifts given to the children were mostly winter accessories such as gloves, mittens and scarves.

The Christmas Wish Tree event has been held since 1991 to help Conestoga students who are financially strapped and every year there has been an overwhelming response from Conestoga students and employees.

The DSA has also organized the food share program, which operates year round. The program collects non-perishable food, which is then distributed to students who cannot afford to buy food.

A student may access the service as often as necessary without completing forms, answering questions or giving his/her name.

The student food bank is located off the main cafeteria. Students may access the food bank by seeing a representative at student services or Janie and Becky at the DSA office.

Tuition hikes make it harder on students to support their families, let alone splurge on Christmas gifts. College tuition has gone up 10 per cent every year for the past few years.

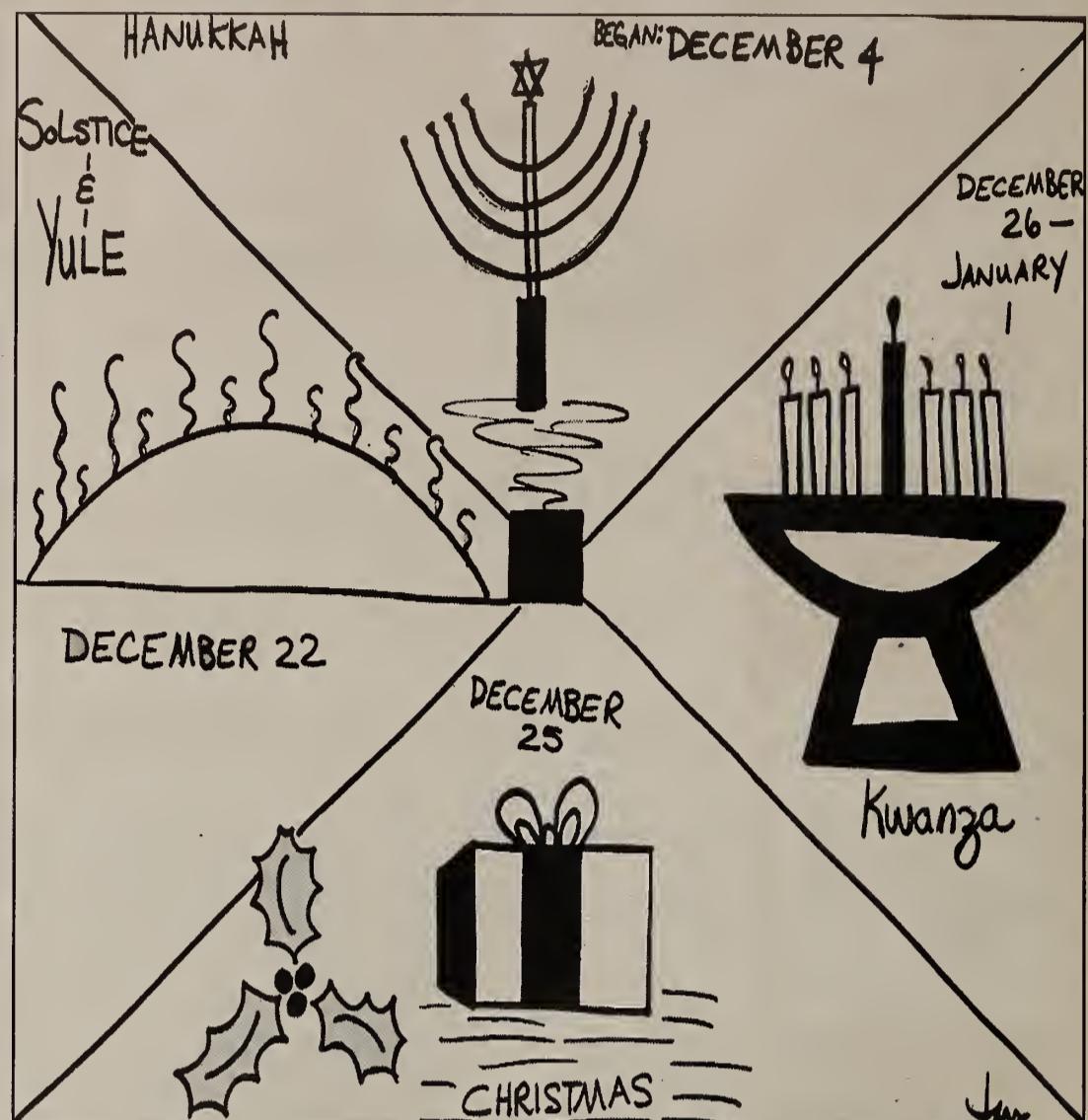
The Record in Kitchener reported in a Nov. 27 editorial that there is more child poverty in Canada today than 10 years ago. In 1989, one child in seven was poor. Today, it's estimated at one child in five, the editorial reported. There are 1.4 million poor children now, half a million more than 10 years ago.

The editorial also noted that in 1996, 12 per cent of local families were poor in Waterloo Region, up from 10 per cent in 1986.

Without the Christmas Wish Tree event, 34 children would have awokened this Christmas Day, thinking Santa had forgotten them.

The DSA, students and employees of Conestoga College are to be commended for their generosity.

They have shown that the real spirit of Christmas is in giving.



Christmas loses face

During this season there are different religious observations and celebrations being held, including Hanukkah, Kwanza, Christmas, Yule, Ramadan and many more.

People from different cultures and religions from all corners of the world are celebrating at this time of year.

However, can someone please explain where the fat man in the red and white suit came from? Who is Santa Claus and what does he have to do with the Christmas season?

It should be a time to spend with family and friends, a time to be thankful for what we have.

When many people think of Christmas they think about Santa, his reindeer and little elves running around a toy factory.

This is a classic example of



Talisha Matheson

where the meaning of Christmas has been lost.

Over the years the Christmas season has become commercialized and more about

receiving than giving.

It should be a time to spend with family and friends, a time to be thankful for what we have.

Many Christians have taken the "Christ" out of Christmas and replaced it with an "X."

According to an American magazine, many African Americans and African Canadians who celebrate Kwanza have put aside the traditional making of gifts and have resorted to buying gifts from stores.

With the hustle and bustle of buying gifts and decking the halls, the true meaning of Christmas and the Christmas season have been lost in our pocketbooks.

It has become the time of year to spend enormous amounts of money and anticipate what we get in return.

No one is exempt from the guilt of forgetting the true meaning of the season.

We have all sunk into the depths of the dark commercialism that is associated with the season.

We buy what we are told to buy and follow the lists to a tee. We focus on material items and what the craze of the year is.

The spirit of the season has been lost in department stores, boutiques and malls.

The thoughts of presents take precedence over the true meaning.

Don't get me wrong I shop for Christmas gifts like the majority of people, but I don't lose sight of what the true meaning of Christmas is for me.

I think we all need to put the money and gifts aside and look deep within to find what the true meaning of the season is for each of us.

SPOKE

Keeping Conestoga College connected

SPOKE is published and produced weekly by the journalism students of Conestoga College.

Editor: Beverley Grondin; **News Editor:** Nicole Furlong;

Photo Editor: Talisha Matheson **Production Manager:** Tannis Fenton;

Advertising Manager: Phil Wright; **Assistant Advertising Manager:** Walerian Czarnecki

Circulation Manager: Adam Wilson; **Faculty Supervisor:** Christina Jonas; **Faculty Adviser:** Sharon Dietz

SPOKE's address is 299 Doon Valley Dr., Room 4B13, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4M4.

Phone: 748-5220 ext. 691, 692, 693, 694 Fax: 748-3534 E-mail: spoke@conestogac.on.ca

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Christmas time is for families

By Beverley Grondin

The holiday season is upon us, but what was once mainly a time to celebrate religiously seems to have evolved into a time to celebrate family.

The majority of students polled in a random survey at Conestoga College's Doon campus Dec. 9 said they do not observe the religious angle of the season, however most said they have plans they look forward to.

Nicholas Ginty, first-year special studies, said his family does not celebrate the holidays religiously.

"Usually we just stick with our close family," he said. "Boxing Day we go to Windsor and visit extended family."

Lilli Petersen, first-year law and security/police foundations, said her family celebrates Christmas at her uncle's house Christmas Eve.

"We open our presents after dinner," said Petersen, who added that her family does not incorporate religion into the festivities. "Then we have a big dessert, dance around the tree and go to bed."

Dave Farhood, first-year busi-

ness management studies, said part of his holiday is spent at his grandparents' house.

"We open our presents on Christmas Day and then we go celebrate with my relatives," he said.

Mike Danforth, first-year electronic engineering, said religion plays a big part in his Christmas celebrations.

"We usually go to church Christmas Eve and Christmas Day," he said. He is Wesleyan, which is a branch of Christianity.

Other than church, his family also enjoys a big dinner and exchanges presents.

"We usually invite my grandparents over and we all get together for Christmas dinner on Christmas Day," said Danforth. "We just spend the whole week relaxing."

Kim Kroeker, third-year business management studies, said her family tries to attend the Christmas Eve service, then goes visiting friends or family afterwards.

"We do (a present exchange) when we wake up Christmas morning," she said.

Marc Figueiredo, third-year business management studies, said he will be doing something a little different over the holidays this year.

"I'm going to England over the three weeks for Christmas and New Year's," he said. "I'm going there with my girlfriend to meet her parents."

Anna Monteiro, second-year nursing, said her family celebrates Christmas a little differently than others.

On the 24th her relatives come over for dinner before going to midnight mass.

"Then we open our gifts, spend time together, watch movies," she said.

Monteiro, who is Polish, added her family also has traditions they observe during dinner.

An extra plate is left on the table for an unexpected guest.

"We can't have meat on that day, so we have mushroom soup, perogies, cabbage and fish," she said.

"It's very family oriented."

Monteiro's family also has another tradition which helps make her Christmas celebrations special.

"We have pieces of white, unleavened bread that we break (and make wishes)," she said. "My dad would break a piece off for me and wish me something, then I would wish him something."

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Rec centre wants DSA to match Coke funds

By Anna Sajfert

Ian James, manager of athletics and recreation, has asked the Doon Student Association to match the \$5,000 donation Coca-Cola has given to the Kenneth E. Hunter Recreation Centre.

Because the recreation centre allows Coca-Cola to have a monopoly of services, the company donates money to the centre.

"It's an ongoing partnership that is benefiting the rec centre because it generates revenue for new equipment," he said.

Conestoga's athletics and recreation department has signed a 12-month contract with Coca-Cola after the company agreed to disburse two \$500 athletic scholarships, a college athlete of the year award for one female and male student, and donate \$5,000 in kind to the rec centre.

The renewal of the original 10-year contract between the two was postponed in 1997 because Coca-Cola was hiring new sales account staff to

replace former sales employees who were being promoted into other departments.

The athletics and recreation department wanted to wait until the organizational changes were completed before any new contracts were signed, said James.

He said the partnership with

"It's an ongoing partnership that is benefiting the rec centre because it generates revenue for new equipment."

*Ian James,
manager of athletics and
recreation*

Coca-Cola is no different from private enterprise scholarships.

"Coke is a good community supporter," said James.

DSA president Ellen Menage said at a Dec. 7 meeting that the DSA is not ready to comment on the partnership because it hasn't been fully informed on the agreement.

DSA considering satellite membership

By Anna Sajfert

The Doon Student Association executive has decided to brainstorm the prospects of expanding the executive membership before presenting the idea at the next board of directors meeting in January 2000.

DSA president Ellen Menage said more vice-presidents on the executive and more subcommittees under the DSA's board of directors are essential in opening communication lines with the five campuses.

"There are loads of part-time and full-time students and the operations now need to be distributed

more evenly," she said.

Menage added that Jenn Hussey, DSA vice-president of student operations, is currently conducting research to find out if students from Guelph, Cambridge, Waterloo and Stratford campuses would be interested in joining an extended student association.

Menage added she would like Conestoga's future student association to resemble student associations at Fanshawe and Humber colleges.

The Fanshawe Student Union is a student representative body comprised of an executive council, student administrative council and class representatives, linking Simcoe, Woodstock and St. Thomas Elgin campuses. Humber

College has two separate student representative bodies under the Students' Association Council including the North Campus Council and the Lakeshore Campus Council.

Copier contract causing crisis

The DSA executive has decided to lease the colour photocopier for another year despite a \$1,223 loss of revenue.

DSA president Ellen Menage said the photocopier generated only \$327 but cost \$1,550 between August and December 1999.

She said the DSA is willing to endure the loss because Doon students use the copier frequently.

Students pay 15 cents a sheet to photocopy material.

VP criticizes report

By Phil Wright

A recent study that concluded that quality of education at community colleges is declining is interesting to read, however it contains factual discrepancies that question its conclusion, according to a Conestoga College executive.

Kevin Mullan, Conestoga's vice-president of finance and administrative operations, was commenting on a study done by The Centre for Research on Work and Society at York University authored by Dr. Jerry White, a sociology professor at the University of Western Ontario.

The study released in November was funded, in part, through an arms-length research grant awarded by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU).

Data was gathered from surveys completed by 517 college professors, and among its findings were the following items:

Total revenue from the college system has experienced an almost yearly decline from \$1.7 billion in 1992-93 to approximately \$1.5 billion in 1996-97.

Total operating costs have declined from \$378.4 million in 1994-95 to \$342.1 million in 1996-97.

Total enrolment has increased

from just under 200,000 students in 1991-92 to just over 218,000 in 1995-96.

Nearly 90 per cent of instructors report morale problems and 62 per cent experienced decreased job satisfaction.

Approximately 70 per cent of professors reported that there has been a decline in the quality of student work.

And nearly 80 per cent of classes have grown an average of about 20 per cent in the past decade.

Although the study is informative, in some cases the data is incorrect which questions the overall accuracy of the report, said Mullan.

For example, Mullan questioned the report's claim overall operating costs for the college system declined from \$378 million in 1994-95 to \$342 million in 1996-97.

The report claims these savings were attributable to savings in the compensation paid to college academic and support staff.

However, according to Mullan, these figures actually represent non-salary expenditures such as school supplies, maintenance and utilities.

Particularly problematic about the error is that the report uses these figures to support its claim that the resulting decline in faculty and support services compensation affected

the quality of the education.

Mullan is also concerned that students and employers of recent college graduates were not questioned.

He said a better indicator of quality would be surveying employers in an ideal position to assess the quality of college graduates.

"Quality is based more on outcomes such as the competence of the graduates produced," he said.

With at least part of the funding being derived from OPSEU, and the study being conducted by a university, there is a perception of bias, said Mullan.

Mullan points to another error in the study, which relates to the municipal tax grants colleges receive as a reimbursement for their municipal taxes.

The study states "grants allocated to compensate for municipal taxation are usually increased as municipalities raise their rates."

However, according to Mullan, these rates are provincially regulated and are fixed at \$75 per capita for full-time post-secondary institutions.

These fixed rates have been in effect for years and are beyond the control of the municipalities, added Mullan.

Though such an error isn't fundamental to the study, it nevertheless questions its accuracy, said Mullan.

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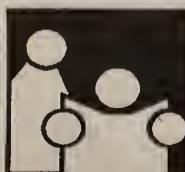
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**Seasons
Greetings**

**From the
DSA**

Wishing everyone
a safe and
happy holiday.

**COUNSELLOR'S CORNER: The
Meaning of Christmas**

Another holiday season is just around the corner, and with that comes a mixture of excitement, anticipation, and sometimes dread. We may be anticipating the spirit of the holiday season, a break from school, and a time for family get-togethers and mingling with friends. However, these feelings may be forgotten as we remember Christmas shopping not yet done, presents we cannot afford to buy, family obligations we have to meet, or loved ones whom we cannot visit.

Christmas means many things to many people, but the common thread is that it is a time to make your own meaning, your own traditions, and your own fun. This holiday season, why not make it a special time by doing things you want to do, for yourself? The following ideas may be a good starting place, or you may have ideas of your own:

Make candles. Go for walks. Read a good book. Drink eggnog or holiday cheer.

Be with people you want to be with. Make chocolates or favourite cookies.

Give because you want to. Be alone when you want to be. Watch a favourite movie.

Celebrate whatever spiritual beliefs have meaning for you. Receive!

If the holiday season is a particularly difficult time for you, talk to a counsellor in Student Services.

***** HAPPY HOLIDAYS *****
SEASON'S GREETINGS *****

A message from Student Services (Room 2B02).

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Entertainment

Go back in time for Christmas

By Adam Wilson

Christmas is only a few days away, but there is still time to check out these holiday flicks with the whole family over the holidays. Each movie is a Christmas classic that deserves to be viewed this time of year.

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer (1964)

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer is a Christmas tale that has been told many times in cartoon form on television. The 1964 version of the movie was done in what looks like plasticine anima-

tion and is a fantastic film.

The movie tells the reindeer story well and adds more to it than ever before.

In this version, Rudolph travels from the North Pole to the Arctic to the Land of Misfits only to get back just in time to take his "blinking beaker" and lead the other reindeer on Christmas Eve with Santa Claus.

The message is clear in this version as well: treat people as you would want to be treated.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1966)

This movie is another classic

Christmas cartoon. Boris Karloff narrates Dr. Seuss's book about a Grinch who tries to steal Christmas from the villagers that reside at the foot of the mountain he lives on.

In typical Christmas fashion, the Grinch sees the true meaning of Christmas and everything turns out happy and joyous as the "mean one" and the villagers celebrate Christmas together.

Look for a live-action version of How the Grinch Stole Christmas next November starring Jim Carrey as the Grinch. Yes, he will be green.

A Christmas Story (1983)

What would one boy have to go through to get the one Christmas gift he wants the most? Peter Billingsley stars as Ralphie, a comical character who wants nothing more than a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas. He tries to convince his parents, the Santa Claus at the local mall and anyone else who will listen this is the perfect gift for him.

A Christmas Story is a hilarious movie, that everyone can relate to and the whole family can watch together during the holiday season.

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)

The best Christmas film you should watch over the holidays is Tim Burton's masterpiece, The

Nightmare Before Christmas.

Filmed in stop-motion animation, this movie is beautiful and well made in every aspect.

It tells the story of Jack Skellington, a lonely skeleton man who lives in Halloween town. As he's walking through the woods one night, he finds a door that leads to Christmas town. Upon entering, Jack discovers the wonders of Christmas and wants to bring it to the "dead" Halloween town.

Jack kidnaps Santa Claus and brings him home, and in the same process, has to fill in for St. Nick when Christmas comes around.

Full of excellent music and songs and produced by a Hollywood great (Burton), The Nightmare Before Christmas is a definite watch for the Christmas season.

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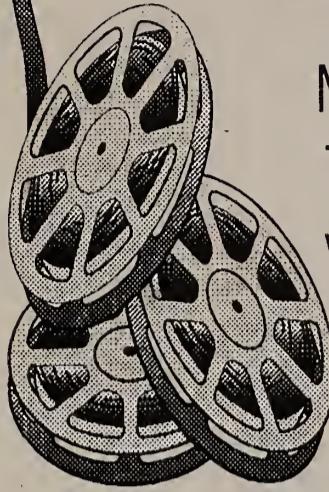
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- ♦ act as a college and community resource for students from other cultures
- ♦ form long-lasting friendships and learn more about other cultures

To find out more about this exciting program and to apply to be a Peer Host, drop by Student Services in Room 2B02 or call 748-5220 ext. 360 or 236.

DSA Elections



Positions Available:
President

Vice President of Operations

Vice President of Student Affairs

Vice President of Education

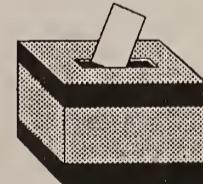
Nominations:
Open from

Mon. Jan. 17, 2000 until

Wed. Jan. 26, 2000 at 12 noon

DOON STUDENT
ASSOCIATION

*Nomination packages available at the DSA office - packages outline candidate's requirements and policies and procedures.



*No candidates will be accepted after Wed. Jan. 26, 2000 at 12 noon.



Merry Christmas.
from the

SPOKE
Conestoga College, Kitchener